

The University of Chicago

STUDIED ATTEMPTS IN
THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS TO MAKE
LEGAL THE JUDAISM OF JESUS

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL IN
CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR
OF PHILOSOPHY

1942

By
WILLIAM NELSON LYONS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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STUDIED ATTEMPTS IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS
TO MAKE LEGAL THE JUDAISM OF JESUS

Recent New Testament research has gone far in returning to the historical Jesus. Through the disciplines of the socio-historical method and "formgeschichte" the frontier of our knowledge has been steadily advanced in the direction of its goal, the message and personality of Jesus of Nazareth. Certain assumptions have had to be granted. Of no little import was the basic assumption that Jesus represented Judaism as it has been set forth by George Foot Moore in his magnum opus, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era. The Age of the Tannaim.¹ Projecting itself from this assumption, modern scholarship has created a dichotomy which has proven all too simple. Literary critics following closely the history of primitive Christianity have set forth this twofold category into which all the tradition has been cast. Those elements in the gospel record which are patently recognized to be Greek or Hellenistic are regarded as late and spurious. On the other hand, whatever of the tradition could be classified as Jewish was regarded as early and authentic. The end product of such a method is a man completely oriented to Judaism, as it existed in Palestine, two thousand years ago. Critics have said such a man was Jesus. It is the purpose of this study to call into question the finality of this dichotomous method and to offer possible alternatives.

It is not to be denied that a Jewish Jesus is, in all probability, much nearer the historical Galilean than a Greek Jesus would be. There are few facts about which we may be more certain than that Jesus was a Jew of some kind or other.

For the sake of definition the distinctions between legalistic Judaism and the Judaism of the various men and sects who diverged from the former are fine and hard to distinguish. The points of difference will not be matters of either/or but will be found in a more devoted and more interested attitude toward cer-

¹(Cambridge: The Harvard University Press, 1927).

tain institutions on the part of the legalistic Jew.

The following characteristics have been examined and have been found to be of value in distinguishing legalistic Judaism from Hellenistic and prophetic Judaism:

1. A more thorough knowledge of and dogged devotion to Torah.
2. Adherence to the oral tradition.
3. A more devoted loyalty to the synagogue.
4. Adherence to the teachings of the scribes.
5. A greater degree of reverence for the temple and its priesthood.
6. A more devoted observance of a sacrificial system.
7. Observance of feast days, fast days and Sabbath. There were many elements in Judaism at the time of Jesus which did not conform to this pattern. To be sure, the differences varied. The Essenes were Pharisaic but their communism and adoption of Hellenistic elements certainly did not conform to this pattern.² The Sadducees differed widely from the legalistic interpretation of Torah.³ Philo of Alexandria, while he accepted Torah and possibly the oral tradition⁴ went beyond the literal interpretation in his mystical search for communion with deity.⁵ The eighth and seventh century prophets damned the sacrificial system because it had been substituted for righteous living.⁶ This same system was an essential part of legalistic religion a few centuries later.

²Josephus Jewish Wars 11. 8. 11; Philo On the Virtue of Being also Free xii; Eusebius Praeparatio Evangelica viii. 8. being a fragment of Philo's Apology for the Jews.

³Any of the handbooks will give the essential differences. By far the best is Louis Finkelstein, The Pharisees, The Sociological Background of Their Faith (2 vols.; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1938).

⁴For the development of this thesis see Samuel Belkin, Philo and the Oral Law, The Philonic Interpretation of Biblical Law in Relation to the Palestinian Halakah (Cambridge: The Harvard University Press, 1940).

⁵The best discussion of Philo's mysticism is Erwin R. Goodenough, By Light, Light, The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism (New Haven: The Yale University Press, 1935).

⁶See Jer. 6:20, Hos. 8:13, Amos 5:21-24.

The Zealots,⁷ the Sicarii,⁸ the Covenanters of Damascus,⁹ the Therapeutae,¹⁰ John the Baptist and Jesus in one way or another distinguished themselves from ordinary legalistic Judaism.

Immediately after the resurrection experiences the Christian church, if we will be permitted an anachronism, was entirely Jewish. There was a time, although brief, that it remained solely Jewish. Very soon it began to spread and take on a Gentile character. Its message was transformed into Greek. Its stories were adapted for the Greek mind. But during all this there was still a vigorous Jewish church. The authority with which this church acted in the case of Cephas at Antioch is evidence of its vigorous life.¹¹ It is only natural to expect that this branch of Christianity would have exerted a moulding influence upon the tradition just as the Greek church did.

It is our thesis that this was the case and that there were studied attempts in the synoptic gospels to make legal the Judaism of Jesus. In the case of Paul, primary documents make possible the demonstration that Acts has revised Paul. He has become a good legalistic Jew. It is true that this is part of the demonstration that Christianity was really Judaism, a religion of antiquity, and consequently should be considered as a religio licita.

Luke-Acts so evidently labors the point that Paul took an irenic attitude toward Jewish customs that it asserts because of the Jews Paul had Timothy circumcised.¹² No sane explanation can reconcile this with Paul's own words that Titus was not circumcised and that he and his colleagues didn't give in for a single moment to these "false brethren."¹³ The tone of the entire conference in the two accounts is different. In Luke-Acts, Paul, acting not for himself but for the church, humbly goes as a delegate to a conference in which both sides get together and mutu-

⁷Josephus Jewish Wars 11. 4. 1, 5. 1, Life iv, vii.

⁸Josephus Antiquities xx. 8. 5.

⁹Jean Juster, Les Juifs dans l'Empire romain, leur condition juridique, économique et sociale (2 vols.; Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1914), I, 486 ff.

¹⁰Goodenough, op. cit., p. 267.

¹¹Gal. 2:11.

¹²Acts 16:3.

¹³Gal. 2:3 ff.

ally admire each other. This is a long way from the belligerent attitude and stubborn resistance of Paul. He accepts circumcision in Acts and the whole dispute which raged so bitterly is completely forgotten.

The systematized picture of Paul's missionary activities in Luke-Acts gives the definite impression that Paul preaches first to Jews and that his efforts were one grand triumphal march from synagogue to synagogue where always on the Sabbath he could find an audience. It is the same story which is repeated almost to the point of boredom in every city. Paul enters the city and goes to the synagogue on Sabbath.¹⁴ At the very climax of Paul's Journey to Rome, which for the author of Luke-Acts is the supreme moment toward which his two volumes have been moving, he sends from his place of detainment for the chief men of the Jews in Rome.¹⁵

Argumentation from silence is weak. Yet certain phenomena are to be observed. If the synagogues of the Mediterranean world played such an important role in the activities of Paul is it not surprising that there is no mention of any preaching in the synagogues in Paul's nine letters? The very nature of the letters dealing with problems associated with the apostle's visit to the communities would warrant an expectation that he would at some time refer to the initial Sabbath of his visit.

Luke-Acts in the attempt to picture the history of early Christianity in as favorable a light as possible adapts the picture of Paul so that it conforms more with that of a legalistic Jew. What is the evidence for a similar treatment of Jesus in the gospels?

The Christian church has always accepted the tradition that Jesus was the eldest son of Mary. This is a necessary counterpart of the virgin birth. The religious importance, however, of a Jewish first-born son has not been so universally understood. Luke subtly reaffirms the fact that Jesus was a first-born son. If this is understood as merely another attestation of the virgin birth it is superfluous. That it served such a purpose is not entirely impossible. What is more probable is that

¹⁴Acts 9:20; 13:5, 14, 44; 14:1; 16:13; 17:1, 2, 10, 16; 18:4, 19; 19:8.

¹⁵Acts 28:17.

the transmitters of this legend meant to suggest in this reaffirmation that as a first-born son Jesus possessed a certain sanctity which otherwise he would not have. Taking this pericope alone there is nothing that suggests virgin birth. It is highly probable that this bit of tradition circulated in an area where the point of emphasis was not birth by a virgin but birth as a first-born son. Certainly the superfluous nature of this affirmation would tend to indicate that this was the case. It is apparent that the area in which this story moved was one in which the highest assertion that could be made about Jesus was that he was the first-born son.

Is it possible that this entire chapter, which continues in its Jewish strain by the employment of the circumcision pericope; the story of purification, and the accounting of the visit to Jerusalem, was a separate source originating in an area which did not know or rejected the virgin birth? Parents who had experienced a virgin birth would not marvel at the praise of Simeon or at the wisdom of the twelve year old. The parallelism in the summary of this possible source with that for the John summary¹⁶ would indicate that here in the second chapter of Luke there is a separate source bodily incorporated into the gospel.

Unlike the other evangelists it was not enough for Luke to let the reader assume that Jesus was circumcised. Having been born a Jew there can be no doubt of the fact that he was circumcised. This bit of tradition not only states explicitly that he was but that it was done at the proper time and that it was at this time he was given the name, Jesus.¹⁷

If chapter two of Luke is to be regarded as a possible source which circulated in a Jewish environment, as has been suggested, the hearer or reader of this legend would not know the name of the first-born son until the proper time, i.e. at the circumcision eight days after birth. There is no reference to the name Jesus prior to this incident in Luke 2. To be sure the angels herald him as "Christ the Lord" but this is a title.

The only difficulty involved is the relative clause which follows and which says Jesus was the name given to him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. If it is true, and

¹⁶Cf. Luke 2:52 and Luke 1:80; see also Luke 2:40.

¹⁷Luke 2:21.

there is every indication that it is, that these stories circulated separately this reference becomes pointless. The question asked by any reader or hearer who heard the account of the birth which began with the enrollment under Quirinius would immediately ask, what angel? It is only when these stories have been fastened to the others, probably not before the final edition of the gospel of Luke, that the references take on any meaning.

Luke's account continues with a very confusing combination of a purification sacrifice and a dedication ceremony.¹⁸ Both are important for our purposes. What was subtly suggested in Luke 2: 7 by the reference to the first-born son is here openly stated. Jesus was dedicated at the temple because he possessed a peculiar sanctity limited to first-born males. It would be useless for the transmitters of this tradition to labor the point of Jesus' being a first-born if they knew and accepted the virgin birth. The unique sanctity involved in being a first-born is but a candle flicker in the brilliant sheen of the direct sonship of God. This tradition came from a Jewish environment which placed particular value on first-born sons.

Even before Jesus is of a responsible age, the hearer of the message is to understand that his parents were scrupulous in their observance of Torah. Everything was done that should have been done. We are to understand that the family's financial condition was such as to demand the less expensive sacrifice but this does not detract from the fact that the sacrifice was made and made properly.

At the age of twelve Jesus is represented as amazing the teachers of the law with his knowledge of Torah.¹⁹ It is not impossible that a twelve year old would be inquiring about religious questions. But the statement in Luke goes beyond the simple affirmation that he was hearing and asking questions of the teachers. Those that heard him were amazed at his understanding as it found expression in his answers. It is highly possible that he might have shown a certain amount of acumen in the questions that were asked. But Jesus is answering questions! The scene clearly represents him teaching the teachers. The impression which the early conveyers of the tradition meant to leave was that at the age of twelve Jesus amazed people by his knowledge of Jewish

¹⁸Luke 2:22 ff.

¹⁹Luke 2: 47 f.

Torah.

In Luke 5:39 some legalist has tried to offset the patent implications of the foregoing analogy of new wine and old wine skins. Whatever the origin of either attitude might be it is apparent that someone disagreed with the practice of using new wine skins and new wine.²⁰ Once one has tasted the old wine he does not desire the new. By this Jesus endorses legalistic Judaism in contradiction to the foregoing.

Again in direct contradiction to what has previously been said Jesus is represented as affirming that it is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the minutest item of law to be forgotten.²¹ He has just told the Pharisees that the law and prophets are no longer valid now that the gospel has come. Their validity ended with John. Apparently this was more than a legalist could accept, and consequently this is inserted at this point to offset the sting of the foregoing.

The locale of a certain pericope varies from gospel to gospel. This is conclusive evidence to demonstrate that originally the core of these structural units circulated separately and that their settings are usually late, very probably being assigned to them by the evangelist. Even when the three synoptic gospels agree in the location of a certain event, as they do in this case, we still have reason to believe that the item of location is late and serves a purpose other than merely locating the event.

If the introductory verse of the pericope of the withered hand²² were a part of the original story and was meant to locate the event, why are we not told in what synagogue this occurred? It must be concluded that location was not the important function of this item. The important point which the creator of this verse wants his hearers and readers to get is that it was Sabbath and that Jesus was in a synagogue on Sabbath as every good Jew should be. The very nature of the paradigm demands that the day

²⁰Rudolf Bultmann, Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1931), p. 18.

²¹Luke 16:17.

²²Mark 3:1-6; Matt. 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11.

be Sabbath, consequently the early Christians were interested in seeing that Jesus was in the synagogue. This same tradition, as it moved into the area from which Luke drew his account, took on another item. Jesus not only was in the synagogue but he was teaching. On the other hand the tradition was affected by some Jew-hating early Christians so that the synagogue was no longer "the" synagogue but it had become "their" synagogue. In this form it was incorporated into Matthew. This we regard as a very clear case of a Greek veneer being placed over a Jewish one, both of which were superimposed on the original paradigm. In this instance the Lukan account remained unaffected by the Greek veneer and was even heightened in its Jewish representation.

Often the pericopes are located in the synagogue on Sabbath.²³ In the pericope concerning the great commandment a scribe addresses Jesus with the question about which is the greatest of the commandments.²⁴ This was not a settled question among the rabbis. In answering, and here we follow Matthew and Luke, Jesus says that the love of God is the first and greatest commandment. If such was not Jesus' answer, it could well have been. This stays true to his prophetic nature. Mr. Dibelius regards this passage as a sententious saying which had adopted the form of the Greek *ῥητὴν*,²⁵ that is, a question-answer form without any of the interesting but necessary detail of the paradigm. In such a form the question is necessary to explain the answer. The relative degree of possible authenticity of this form of sententious saying is high.²⁶

If Grant is correct in his demonstration that some of the laws of textual criticism can be pushed back and can be discovered operative in the oral tradition,²⁷ it is possible to apply the

²³Luke 4:16 ff, "as was his custom"; cf. Matt. 4:23; 9:35; Mark 1:21-28, 39; Luke 4:15, 31-37, 44; 13:10-17.

²⁴Mark 12:28-34, Matt. 22:34-40; Luke 20:39-40.

²⁵Martin Dibelius, Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1919), translated by Bertram Lee Woolf, From Tradition to Gospel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. 160.

²⁶Donald W. Riddle, The Gospels, Their Origin and Growth (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939), pp. 38 f.

²⁷Frederick C. Grant, "Where Form Criticism and Textual Criticism Overlap," The Journal of Biblical Literature, LIX (1940), 11-21.

canon of textual criticism that the shorter reading is to be preferred to this pericope. In this case Mark is the expanded form. A dialogue which merely reaffirms what has already been said has been added and the scribe is proclaimed as being "not far" from the kingdom of God. Of greater import is the addition to the Markan account of the Shema.²⁸ Apparently some early Christian could not understand how Jesus could omit such an important part of the Deuteronomic quotation, and so it is inserted regardless of the fact that it makes a double answer when the question specifically calls for a single reply. So in the transmitting of this bit of tradition it is the expanded form, the form which represents Jesus as thoroughly orthodox, which found a place in our earliest gospel.

When accused by the Pharisees of breaking Sabbath Jesus defends his disciples, and himself, in Luke, by a Haggadic reference to David.²⁹ The degree of authenticity of this bit of Jewish lore is high. Its prophetic emphasis on the importance of human need could well have come from Jesus. In recounting this brief story it is asserted that Abiathar was high priest at the time. Some conscientious Jew whose devotion to Torah was great could not bear the thought that Jesus, the Messiah of God, had erred in regard to this detail. Consequently Matthew and Luke who are following very closely at this point omit the mistake. Ahimelech was high priest at the time and the early Christians soon discovered this, much to their chagrin. This correction would relieve the charge of ignorance on the part of Jesus in regard to the law.

In the story of John's miraculous birth it is recorded that he was the son of a priest and of a daughter of Aaron.³⁰ They observed all the commandments. We are to understand that John's birth took place in a thoroughly Jewish house which was a home devoted to Torah on the one hand, and closely identified with the temple cultus on the other.

Furthermore, the creators of this tradition not only assert that John came from a family of priests but that the annunciation of his miraculous birth occurred in the temple.³¹ Here

²⁸Mark 12:29.

²⁹Mark 2:23-28; Matt. 12:1-8; Luke 6:1-5.

³⁰Luke 1:5.

³¹Luke 1:9.

at the heart of the sacrificial system of Judaism, in the house of the Lord, the angel of God appears to Zacharias and proclaims the end of Elizabeth's barrenness.

Not only does the locale of this annunciation serve the purpose of identifying John with the temple and its cultus but the temporal aspect of the announcement is of great importance. It was at the hour when all the people were praying outside and Zacharias was in the culminating act of the sacrifice. This task was no mean duty. The offering of the incense had long been the prerogative of the High Priest and when performed by a lesser priest it was regarded as a solemn function.³² At the moment when this important sacrifice was at its culmination the angel of God appeared standing at the right of the altar and proclaimed the miraculous birth of a great son.

It was not enough that Jesus was a member of the John group. In the annunciation to Mary³³ the subtle identification of relationship between Jesus and John is made. This is clearly Christian interpretation from the period when the identification of Jesus with John was regarded as valuable. The visit of Mary to Elizabeth serves the purpose of subordinating John to Jesus. A secondary purpose that it might well have served, although no mention is made of it, is that it verifies the close relationship of the two women.

An interesting detail is the further development of this tradition about John's and Jesus' relation to the temple cultus in the Protevangelium of James. Here the mother of Jesus spends her childhood in the temple. Being miraculously born she is dedicated to the Lord and at three years of age is taken to the temple where she stays being fed by an angel until she is twelve. The impurity of the nearing menstrual period makes it necessary for the high priest to arrange for her marriage to a righteous widower. Zacharias was the high priest. His identification as the father of John is confirmed.³⁴ Not only is the mother of Jesus a consecrated child who was reared in the temple but Zacharias, the father of John, is elevated from a mediocre position of an ordinary priest performing an important sacrifice to the office of High Priest.

³²Mishnah Tamid.

³³Luke 1:26 f.

³⁴Protevangelium of James, 10:1; 23:1.

The Protevangelium continues in its studied purpose to make more important the Jewish details of the canonical gospels. Simeon who in Luke blesses Jesus is also a high priest. The harmonization which accomplishes the feat of getting rid of Zacharias so that Simeon might be high priest is most ingenious.

We have already observed that on Sabbath Jesus was where he should be, in the synagogue. In the pericope about plucking grain on Sabbath³⁵ there is one clear cut indication that some Christians of the early church prevented Jesus from being accused of breaking Sabbath. The charge brought by the Pharisees in Luke is τὶ ποιῶντι ὃ οὐκ ἐξέσται τοῖς σάββατον. Jesus is as guilty as his disciples of doing an unlawful thing on Sabbath. Mark and Matthew have relieved Jesus of this charge, Mark by changing ποιῶντι to ποιοῦσιν and Matthew by specifically accusing the disciples. The explanation for the transition from Luke to Mark and Matthew convinces me that Luke contains the original, or shall we say the more original, wording. If it can be demonstrated that there is a more probable explanation for the change from Mark to Luke, then further attestation for the authenticity of Luke would have to be sought.

In addition to the studied attempts to make Jesus conform to traditional, normative Judaism the early Christian propagandists used analogies, sometimes subtly and sometimes quite openly, to place both Jesus and John in the same category with the great men of Jewish lore.

The legend concerning the announcement of John's miraculous birth calls to mind three similar instances and we are certain that the creator of this bit of tradition meant that his story should do just that. The cases of Abraham and Sarah, Manoah and his wife, Elkanah and Hannah, share many items in common with the case of Zacharias and Elizabeth.³⁶ The situation of all four women is the same, they were barren. This is not explicitly stated in the case of Sarah. The reason given here for the impossibility of childbirth is that she is too old. Barrenness, however, is to be understood because no Jewish women ever reached the age of Sarah without bearing a family unless it were a physical impossibility. It is only the modern Anglo-Saxon

¹Mark 2:23-28; Matt. 12:1-8; Luke 6:1-5.

²Gen. 18:1-15; Judg. 13:1-20 and I Sam. 1:1-18; cf. Luke 1:5-25.

woman that does that.

By one means or another a message predicting the end of barrenness is given to one of the parents from the Lord. In the case of Abraham it is Yahweh himself who delivers the message to the father but it is overheard by the mother. Samson's mother is forewarned by an angel and later the same angel confirms the message to Manoah. Yahweh speaks through his priest Eli in the case of Hannah and it is an angel that tells Zacharias the good news that his wife is no longer barren. Details may differ but the general pattern is the same. The good tidings are heralded by Yahweh or a messenger and never is the couple taken by surprise.

In three of the cases, that of Samuel excepted, there is a prediction about the importance of the birth. Abraham because of the miraculous birth of his son is to become the progenitor of a great and mighty nation and all the nations will be blessed in him. Samson is to be the beginning of salvation for Israel from the hands of the Philistines. At the birth of John there will be joy and gladness. Many will rejoice because of his birth and he is to be great in the sight of the Lord.

Fear plays a part in all of these stories. Sarah, after she had mocked Yahweh by laughing at the idea that so old a woman would bear a son, was afraid and denied that she had laughed and Yahweh contradicts her. It is Manoah who fears death after the angel leaves because he felt they had talked with Yahweh. Hannah's fear is of a little different nature. She is afraid that Eli would think her drunk, as he did. Zacharias is greatly frightened by the sudden appearance of the angel at the altar of incense.

Skepticism plays a role in two of the accounts, that of Isaac and of John. Sarah laughed at Yahweh for thinking such a preposterous thing. Zacharias was struck blind because of his unwillingness to believe.

In the cases of Samson, Samuel and John, the Nazirite vow is to be observed. Both Samuel and Samson will not have a razor touch their heads. Nothing is said about that in John's case. All three will not drink wine and strong drink. To get this testimony for Samuel it is necessary to read the Septuagint but it must not be forgotten that the Septuagint was the Bible of the early Christians.

The identification of John with Elijah is one which

served the early Christians' purpose beautifully. The almost unanswerable question which must be found is--was this identification made prior to the time when the Christians put John in a subordinate position or was it a part of their effort to explain the role of John as Jesus' forerunner? There is no reason to believe that the prediction of the angel³⁷ has any reference to Jesus. John's message of the day of judgment could well be the sole motivating purpose for this identification of him with Elijah.

Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.³⁸

The Rabbinic development of this passage, to be sure, involved the identification of the coming of the Messiah with the day of Yahweh and the role of Elijah being that of a forerunner.³⁹ Certainly there were many of John's followers who failed to accept his role as a forerunner serving in a subordinate position to one of his disciples and to whom a reference to Elijah could mean nothing else than the fulfillment in John of the prophecy of Malachi that Elijah would come before the day of Yahweh.

The birth of Jesus is not void of analogies with that of Samuel. The Magnificat of Mary clearly reflects the song of thanksgiving of Hannah.⁴⁰ One part of the Magnificat gets its reference from the petition of Hannah.⁴¹

One further item should not go unnoticed. After the gospel tradition had expanded and had been transmitted over a period of fifty to sixty years and after one gospel had been written which purported to represent Jesus as a mighty wonder worker, some editor possibly in the vicinity of Antioch set about to compile a gospel. Before him was the gospel of Mark as well as other

³⁷Luke 1:17.

³⁸Mal. 4:5, 6, cf. The Wisdom of Ben Sira 48:10.

³⁹C. G. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, edited with an Introduction and a Commentary (2 vols.; London: Macmillan and Company, 1909, 1927), II, 379.

⁴⁰Cf. Luke 1:46-55 with I Sam. 2:1-10.

⁴¹Cf. Luke 1:48 with I Sam. 1:11.

material possibly in the form of a source which recounted the words of Jesus. The product of this man's work is our gospel of Matthew. In a thoroughly Jewish fashion by the arrangement of his gospel this evangelist consciously imitated the five books of Moses and capitalized on the numerical values of three, seven, and ten.

Familiar to all is the Sermon on the Mount. Of less familiarity are the four other discourses of Jesus. It has been admirably demonstrated that Matthew consciously arranged the teaching of Jesus into five "books."⁴² Book one deals with the sermon on righteousness (chapters 5-7), book two, the mission charge (ch. 10), book three, the parables of the kingdom (ch. 13) book four, the sayings on the "little ones" and forgiveness (ch. 18) and book five deals with the woes and the last things (chs. 23-25). The formula which clearly indicates the end of each book is καὶ ἰγίνετα ὅτι ἰτελλίσιν ὁ Ἰησοῦς.⁴³ Not only does this division of five call to mind the five books of the Pentateuch but the five books of Psalms, the five possible divisions of the book of Ecclesiasticus, the five books of Jason of Cyrene which the author of II Maccabees proposes to abridge, the five parts of the Book of Enoch and the five Pereqs which make up the Pirke Aboth. It is no accident that Matthew incorporates into his gospel five speeches of Jesus. We know from Mark and Luke that this was not the original form of these sayings. Matthew's clear function was to draw the analogy with the five books of Torah for the purpose of interpreting the Christian teaching as the new law.

It is equally difficult to believe that the use of Jewish sacred numbers by Matthew was a mere coincidence. The seven petitions to the Lord's Prayer as opposed to five in Luke,⁴⁴ the

⁴²See Benjamin W. Bacon, "The Five Books of Matthew against the Jews," Expositor, VIII (1918), 85 ff.; Sir John C. Hawkins, Horae Synopticae, Contributions to the Study of the Synoptic Problem (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1909), pp. 163-65; Burnett H. Streeter, "On the Original Order of Q," Studies in the Synoptic Problem by Members of the University of Oxford, ed. William Sanday (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1911), pp. 141-64; and Benjamin W. Bacon, Studies in Matthew (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930), pp. 80-90.

⁴³Matt. 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1.

⁴⁴Matt. 6:9-13.

three degrees of anger,⁴⁵ the three duties of alms, prayer and fasting,⁴⁶ the seven parables of chapter thirteen, the three triads of fourteen in the genealogy⁴⁷ and the ten miracles of chapters eight and nine, all are instances of the stereotyping of the teaching of Jesus in the same fashion as the scribes did for the sake of remembering the sayings and events. The three temptations in both Matthew and Luke⁴⁸ and the three prayers in Gethsemane⁴⁹ would tend to indicate that this Jewish arrangement, of which Matthew makes so much, has been adopted at these points by the other synoptists.

A desirable feature of this study would be the establishment of historical connections as this process relates to the early Christian communities. Paul's vivid conflict with the "James Party" at Antioch when they succeeded in winning over Peter to their scrupulous observance of maintaining separateness from Gentiles⁵⁰ would indicate that in James and his followers in the Jerusalem church we would have a group which might well have been those who made this attempt. If the scholars could agree upon who Paul's opponents were in the Galatian churches, we might be able to identify them as supports of this influence on gospel tradition. I would have no hesitation in ascribing this studied attempt at Jewish veneering to the Jerusalem church. To be sure the demonstration of this is somewhat difficult. The evidence is all circumstantial. That Antioch played a role in it is probable. The possibility of Matthew originating in Antioch is an item in our favor. This in addition to the fact that the conflict between Paul and Peter occurred at Antioch would seem to indicate the role that this city played. In all events, the terminus ad quem of this attempt was the disappearance of the Jewish-Christian communities sometime after the flight to Pella.⁵¹

In conclusion it is to be said that the Jesus of the gospels seems to be a combination of three elements: the historical

⁴⁵Matt. 5:22.

⁴⁶Matt. 6:1-18.

⁴⁷Matt. 1:17.

⁴⁸Matt. 4:3-10; Luke 4:3-12.

⁴⁹Matt. 26:39-44; Mark 14:35-41.

⁵⁰Gal. 2:11-14.

⁵¹The existence of the Protevangelium would tend to indicate otherwise; however, it is to be regarded as a "popular gospel for a minority group."

Jesus, whatever he might have been, a Jewish veneer and finally and most extensively a Greek veneer. As a consequence of this there must be stated a canon of interpretation which says-- wherever there is a representation of Jesus which is either typically Greek or typically Jewish, the authenticity of the passage should be called into question. No longer should the distinction between Greek and Jewish be the determining factor in authenticity. It should be whether or not there has been an attempt to stereotype. By such a rigorous method we will only get glimpses of the man who taught in prophetic originality but those glimpses will be as gems amid the crude metal of a stereotyped Jesus whether he be Jew or Greek.

